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WOOD BUFFALO National Park

Nov. 1981

PARKS CANADA IS PLANNING
FOR THE FUTURE OF WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL
PARK AND WE NEED YOUR HELP.

PARCS CANADA SOLLICITE VOTRE COLLABORATION
AUX PLANS D'AVENIR QU'IL EST EN
TRAIN D'ÉLABORER POUR LE PARC NATIONAL
WOOD BUFFALO.

No. 5

KENETAWAYMITAN TA WECHEHEAK OMA
KAWAY WEASCHEKIAK OCHE WOOD
BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK.

MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROGRAM

ALTERNATIVE PLAN PROPOSALS

Parks Canada is developing a long range management plan for Wood Buffalo National Park.

After hearing your views and suggestions at the public meetings last winter; reading your briefs and letters; talking with you informally and considering many different types of information, alternative plan

proposals have been prepared. These proposals **are not final plans** but combine the many suggestions that have been made and take into account the many different factors that influence how the individual planning issues can be resolved.

The purpose of this fifth newsletter is to present the plan proposals and to obtain your

reaction. The alternative judged to be the most satisfactory, or a new proposal composed of different elements drawn from the individual items presented here will be developed and reviewed during the next stage of the program. It is important to note that the plan proposals presented in this newsletter are not final decisions.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

Write your comments in the spaces provided in this newsletter, fold it and staple it closed and drop it in the mail. Postage will be paid by Parks Canada.

You can also send your written views to:

LUTRA ASSOCIATES LTD.
BOX 1866
YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.
XOE 1H0

Lutra Associates has again been contracted by Parks Canada to co-ordinate public input into the development of the management plan for Wood Buffalo National Park.

You may also contact the planning team at the park administration office in Fort Smith. Phone or write them. Their address is:

WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK
BOX 750
FORT SMITH, N.W.T.
XOE 0P0
(403) 872-2649

Meet with the planning team and discuss these alternatives. You can do this at public meetings to be held in:

Garden Creek, Alta.	Fort McMurray, Alta.
Peace Point, Alta.	Edmonton, Alta.
Fort Chipewyan, Alta.	Calgary, Alta.
High Level, Alta.	Fort Smith, N.W.T.
Fort Vermilion, Alta.	Fort Resolution, N.W.T.
Fox Lake, Alta.	Pine Point, N.W.T.
Jean D'or Prairie, Alta.	Hay River, N.W.T.

Watch for announcements for the exact time and place of these meetings.

If you live in a community in or near the park, talk with your local liaison officer. They are listed below.

NEYANUN EKWA EYAKWOMA ACHIM-OASINAKANA KA MASINAKATIKI OMA KAWAYASCHIKICHIK WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK.
 OMA ACHIMOSINAKANA ENSTWAYUK SI WETAMOK TAKISEWASTANTO EKWA TANSI TISE MENOSTATCHI NANTO ESA MIPAYIK EKWA EYAKWUNE OHI TA IMO-TAMUK MAMOPUNIK ANOCH PIPOKIK KINOTI KISKITINAWOW TANSI KISHAN-ACH OHKIK KA PEKISWATAWOK.

Jackson Whiteknife	Fort Chipewyan
Rene Mercredi	Fort Smith
Cathy MacDonald	Fort Smith
Ray Sonfrere	Hay River
Simon Nanooch	Garden Creek
Sharon Dragon	Pine Point
John James Antoine	Peace Point
Margaret Vermillion	Fort Chipewyan

ALTERNATIVE 2 - is based on provision of increased development and management. There are more opportunities and facilities provided for people visiting the park and more use of active resource management techniques. The bulk of the park will remain as wilderness.

ALTERNATIVE 3 - is the approach most slanted toward facility and access development. This alternative relies, to a lesser extent, on strict resource preservation and natural processes as a base for resource management than the other alternatives. Alternative 3, however, still takes into account the necessity to protect the park resources and recognizes the wilderness character of the park.

It is important to note that the draft management plan may not be one of the three options outlined in this newsletter. Based on your review and input, various elements from option 1, 2 and/or 3 may be combined in the final plan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

PREPARING PARK PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS
IDENTIFYING ISSUES & COLLECTING INFORMATION

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT WINTER, 1981

PREPARING ALTERNATIVE PLANS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT FALL, 1981

This is where
we are now.

SELECTING A FINAL PARK PLAN

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT SPRING, 1982

FINAL APPROVAL SUMMER, 1982

We are now in Stage 2 of the planning process as shown above. The alternative plan proposals described in this newsletter will be discussed at a series of meetings to be held in November and December of 1981. Your input at these meetings and your written comments will be utilized in preparing a draft management plan which will be presented for your review in the spring of 1982. This plan will then be amended and refined and presented to the Minister of the Environment for final

approval.

After the plan has been signed, the major decisions will be put into effect over a period of years. Actual implementation of the plan is dependant on the financial resources made available to Parks Canada. The plan itself will be formally reviewed at five year intervals and amendments made if required. The plan is designed to remain in effect for a period of ten to fifteen years.

CET BULLETIN DE NOUVELLES EST AUSSI DISPONIBLE EN FRANÇAIS

THE ALTERNATIVE PLAN PROPOSALS

There are many different issues that affect the development of a comprehensive management plan for Wood Buffalo National Park. These have been described in earlier newsletters and were the focus for discussions during the first stage of public meetings last winter. Since there may be more than one way to achieve the park objectives and solve a particular issue or problem, alternative proposals have been prepared. These are presented here for your consideration. The ideas for each proposal have come from your input, studies of the park and consideration of other information such as the history of a certain issue, Parks Canada's legislation and policies, environmental data and assessment of environmental and regional impacts.

Three general approaches have been taken to address the many planning issues and in presenting the proposals. These three approaches, termed alternative 1, 2, and 3

describe the general orientation of the individual proposals and are intended to make it easier to understand the various options that are being presented.

It has not always been possible to develop three different solutions to solve each planning issue while still meeting the objectives of the park and taking into account the different public suggestions and technical information. For some issues, only 2 different approaches are feasible while for others, only a single position is appropriate.

The plan options have been grouped, where possible, under three main headings.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - emphasizes the maximum protection of park resources and limits park development to those areas presently accessible. With this alternative, decisions are based on the maintenance of natural processes and the limiting of development.

ACCESS AND VISITOR USE FACILITY DEVELOPMENTS:

REGIONAL AND INTERNAL ROADS

OBJECTIVE:

To define what new roads or alterations to existing roads are required in the park in order to provide adequate access to the park while also ensuring the protection of park resources.

New demands on the existing park road network reflect the growth of regional communities and the increasing tourist traffic. The economic benefits of better access to southern Canada for regional communities, the cost of constructing, maintaining and

upgrading roads, Parks Canada policy, the desire of the public to gain easier access to park resources and the protection of those same resources all contribute to the definition of the alternatives proposed here.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

ALTERNATIVE 2:

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Highway 5

Parks Canada will encourage the proposal by the Government of the Northwest Territories to surface Highway 5.

Parks Canada will encourage the proposal by the Government of the Northwest Territories to surface Highway 5. Minor route modifications to improve visitor enjoyment would be designed and funded by Parks Canada.

Parks Canada will encourage the proposal by the Government of the Northwest Territories to surface Highway 5.

Loop Road

Improved maintenance will be undertaken on the loop road. It will remain at a fair weather road standard.

Would be upgraded to all weather standard. Parks Canada would give support to a crossing of the Slave River that would have minimal impact on the park and all weather access to Fort Chipewyan. The upgraded loop road would form the north part of this route.

South and east portions maintained at current standard, with improved maintenance. The west side would be upgraded.

Winter Road

Will remain on its present alignment. Parks Canada would support a provincial proposal to relocate the winter road to the east side of the Slave River, thereby reducing the number of ice crossings from 3 to 1.

Would remain on existing alignment with minor improvements. Relocation as in Alternative 1 would be supported.

Would remain on existing alignment. Relocation would be supported as in Alternative 1 and 2.

New Roads

No additions to existing road system.

No additions to existing road system.

Parks Canada accepts, in principle, the construction of an all-weather road from Alberta Highway 58 to Peace Point for regional transportation network purposes. This is subject to the findings of current studies on the Peace River corridor. As the road is not required for park purposes, Parks Canada will not fund the construction or subsequent maintenance of the road but may contribute to design costs to ensure that any potential route is environmentally acceptable.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)



RAINBOW LAKES

OBJECTIVE:

To determine the appropriate level of access and facility development needed at the Rainbow Lakes.

These small sinkhole lakes are visited by a very small number of local residents each summer. Most of them fish for trout which were at one time stocked by the park in the largest of the lakes. A cutline extends from

the Pine Lake road to the lakes. It no longer provides access to vehicles. At present the cutline is part of a trail system under development in the area. Three alternatives for development in the area are provided here.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

ALTERNATIVE 2:

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Access

The existing 6 km hiking trail would provide access to the lakes.

Additional trails would be developed to the Salt Plains.

The existing trail will be retained and upgraded. Additional trails would be developed to the Salt Plains north of the lakes.

A low standard road (6 km) will be constructed along the cutline to the proximity of the lakes. Additional trails would be developed.

Facilities

A small primitive campground would be developed adjacent to one of the lakes. Non-motorized craft transported to the lakes by users will be permitted.

Development of a small primitive campground. Canoes would be provided at the lakes under a concession agreement.

A 5-site primitive (walk-in) campground will be developed adjacent to one of the lakes. Non-motorized water craft only will be permitted.

Fish-Stocking

Will not be carried out.

Will not be carried out.

Will be carried out on a continuing basis.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

NORTH END / HIGHWAY 5 CORRIDOR

OBJECTIVE:

To provide appropriate levels of visitor facilities in the north end of the park and in the highway 5 corridor in order to increase visitor enjoyment and understanding of the park resources of that area.

Residents of communities north of the park have expressed a desire for park facilities to be developed closer to their homes. Tourists entering the park from the north do not have the opportunity to become aware of park resources until they reach Fort Smith.

The proper level of development must take into consideration the small numbers of visitors to the area as well as the significance of park resources and the importance of informing the public about them.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

ALTERNATIVE 2:

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Facilities

Orientation exhibit and roadside picnic facilities at Angus Tower with short interpretive trail. Roadside picnic facilities constructed at Nyarling River Crossing.

Orientation exhibit and picnic facility at Angus Tower. A roadside trail head at Nyarling River Crossing and a hiking trail to Needle Lake (12 km).

Orientation exhibit and picnic facilities at Angus Tower. Roadside picnic facility at Nyarling River Crossing. Upgrading of existing trail to Needle Lake to provide vehicle access. Primitive campground at Needle Lake accessible by road.

Interpretation

Improved signage of facilities along highway 5. Preparation of an interpretive roadway guide. (booklet or pamphlet).

Interpretive loop trail near whooping crane nesting habitat. Preparation of an interpretive roadway guide. Improved signage of features.

Interpretive loop trail near whooping crane nesting habitat. Preparation of an interpretive roadway guide. Improved signage of features.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

PARSON'S LAKE ROAD/ SALT PLAINS ACCESS

OBJECTIVE: To provide an appropriate level of public access to the Salt Plains area of the park while still ensuring that it is protected in its natural state.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

Access

Parson's Lake Road maintained at existing standard - fair weather use only. Footbridge over Salt River. Parks Canada would work co-operatively with Government of the Northwest Territories to improve Mission Farm road for alternate access to Salt Plains.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Parson's Lake Road between Highway 5 and Salt River upgraded to provide access to the Salt Plains view-point. Parks Canada would work co-operatively with Government of the Northwest Territories to improve Mission Farm Road and would support construction of a Salt River bridge to create an interpretive loop drive.

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Parson's Lake Road from Loop Road to Salt River and Highway 5 would be improved to permit all weather use. Interpretive features would be signed.

Facilities

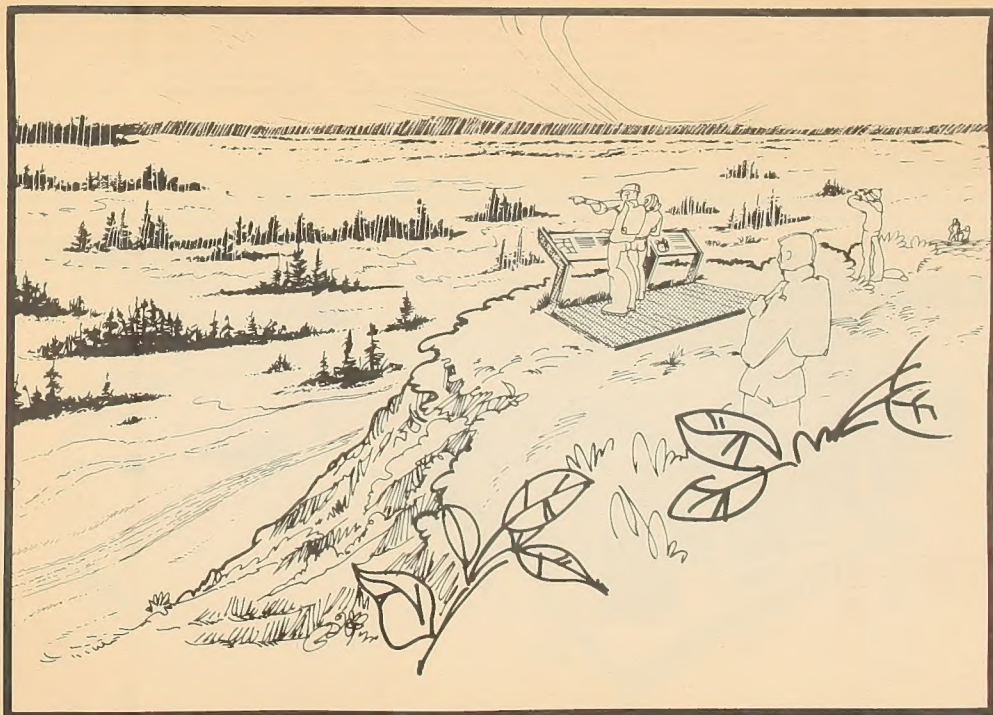
No specific proposals for facilities.

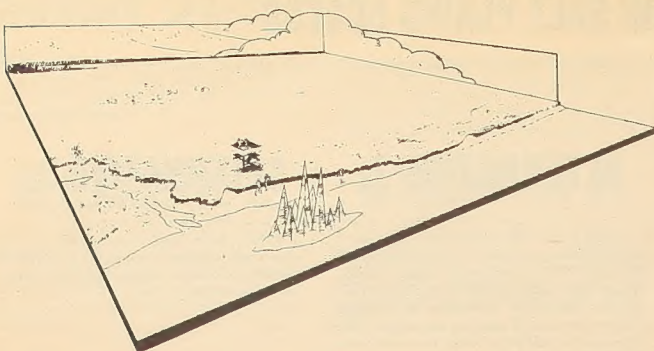
Canoe launch at Salt River. Interpretive exhibit at Salt Plains overlook (no direct access to Salt Plains).

Canoe launch at Salt River. Interpretive exhibit at Salt Plains overlook. Trails/boardwalk along margins of Salt Plains for interpretive purposes.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)





PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA

OBJECTIVE:

To identify the most appropriate type of facilities and the most suitable level of development so that the public can appreciate, enjoy and obtain an understanding of this significant resource without damaging it.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta is one of the great freshwater deltas in the world and supports a varied and delicate ecosystem. It provides outstanding opportunities for interpretation and low intensity public use.

Three proposals are outlined below which describe varying levels of facility development and access to permit the public to gain an appreciation of the delta without damaging the resource itself. In all three

proposals, uncontrolled public access to the delta is not permitted due to safety and resource protection considerations. Trappers and hunters are not affected by these proposals.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

Access

Limited access - single motor boat access corridor, available to licensed guides and outfitters only - No general motorized public access. No restriction on use of navigable waterways (Quatre Fourches, Athabasca River, etc.).

Facilities

Boat docking and launching facility at Moose Island. Primitive campsites at Sweetgrass Station. Improvements to portage - Peace River to Sweetgrass Creek.

Interpretation

Interpretive guide (booklet) to the Peace-Athabasca Delta prepared. Interpretive exhibits developed at Moose Island and Embarras Portage.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Less Restricted Areas - sizeable part of the delta available for use by licensed guides and outfitters. - no general motorized public access. No restrictions on use of navigable waterways. River transport provided by guides or outfitters will be encouraged.

Boat docking and launching facility at Moose Island. Primitive campsites at Sweetgrass Station, Egg Lake and Dog Camp. Improvements to portage from Peace River to Sweetgrass Creek and new portages Embarras River, Lake Mamawi and into Pushup Lake.

Interpretive guide (booklet) to the Peace Athabasca Delta. Interpretive exhibits at Moose Island, Sweetgrass Station and Embarras Portage.

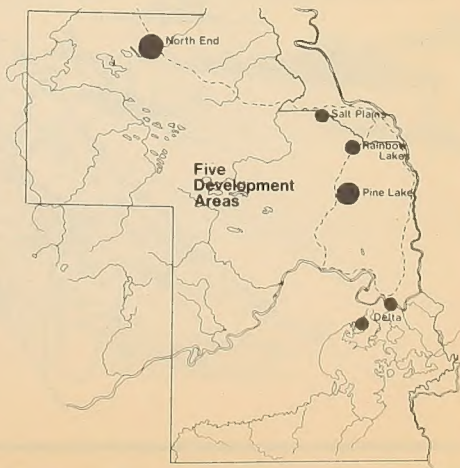
ALTERNATIVE 3:

Major water bodies open for use by guides and outfitters only. No restrictions on use of navigable waterways.

More intensive development of Moose Island docking and launching area to include a small semi-serviced campground. Primitive campsites as described in Alternative 2. Portages developed and improved as in Alternative 2.

Interpretive guide (booklet) to the delta prepared. Interpretive exhibits, Fort Chipewyan, Moose Island, Sweetgrass Station and Embarras Portage.

COMMENTS: (please write comments here)



PINE LAKE RECREATION AREA

OBJECTIVE:

To determine the proper type and level of development for the Pine Lake Recreation area which satisfies the desires of park users while ensuring the area remains attractive for future users.

The main public recreational developments in the park - the only park campground, the day use area and swimming beach, the group camp, the boat launch and the interpretive theatre are located on the west and south shores of Pine Lake.

Three proposals are presented below which describe how the Pine Lake area could be developed and managed in the future. Options for the sixteen privately owned cottages, located at Pine Lake are presented elsewhere in the newsletter.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

ALTERNATIVE 2:

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Day Use Area

New day use area developed on prime shoreline areas, at north end of present cottage subdivision. This land would become available with expiry of the cottage lot leases.

No new day use facilities and areas will be developed unless the existing facilities become over-used. New facilities will then be developed on the site of the north block of cottages which will be removed to permit development of the new day use area.

Retention of existing day use area for both campers and day users. Development of small day use sites with picnic tables, garbage cans and toilets on east side of Pine Lake. They will be accessible by hiking and boating.

Campgrounds

Retention of existing 36-site campground. Walk in primitive campground developed at south end of the lake.

Retention of existing 36-site campground with development of an additional loop based on demand. Walk in primitive campground developed at south end of Pine Lake.

Existing 36-site semi-serviced campground retained. Additional campsites developed based on demand. Location of new campsites to be discussed in public meetings in local communities during design phase of new campsites. Walk-in primitive campground developed at south end of Pine Lake.

Group Camp

Minor upgrading. Additional maintenance to improve facility.

As in Alternative 1.

As in Alternative 1.

Boat Use

Only non-motorized boats and boats with electric motors will be permitted.

Motor boats permitted except on south bay with 10 horse power limit imposed.

Motor boats permitted except in south bay. No horse power limit.

Interpretation

Existing level of interpretation will be maintained. Development of display exhibit to orient visitors.

As in Alternative 1.

As in Alternative 1

Trails

No additional trail developments in Pine Lake area.

As in Alternative 1.

Trails system extended to include access to east side of Pine Lake, proposed day use areas and a short loop trail east of the group campground.

Fish Stocking

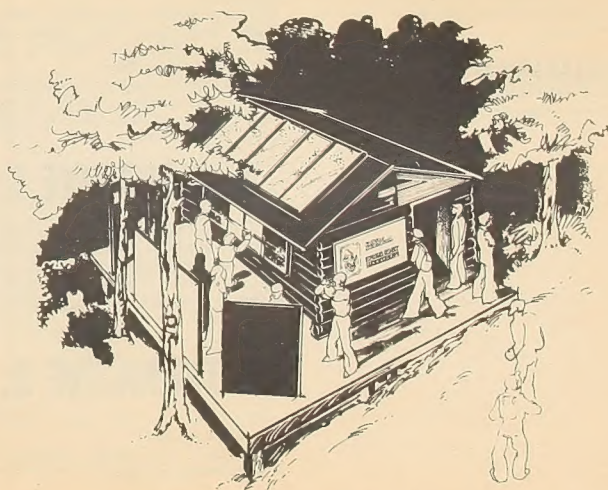
None.

Conducted on an ongoing basis.

As in Alternative 2.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)



PINE LAKE COTTAGES

OBJECTIVE:

To find the appropriate policy to be applied to the Pine Lake cottages.

Sixteen privately owned cottages are located at Pine Lake, on lands leased from Parks Canada. The cottage leases expire in 1983 and 1984 and contain a sever and remove clause which requires the leaseholder to remove improvements from the lot. The leases have no provision for renewal.

Current Parks Canada policy does not provide for the leasing of park lands for private recreational residences. However, Parks Canada recognizes the traditional use of Pine Lake for that purpose.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

The existing leases would not be renewed. The sever and remove clause would apply. Financial assistance (\$1,500.00) would be provided to lease holders to ensure environmental damage caused by the removal of improvements is minimized.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Existing leases would not be renewed but tenure would be continued through non-assignable, non-renewable licences of occupation granted to existing lease-holders. Parks Canada would work with the cottagers to establish conditions and standards for the cottage subdivision. This licence of occupation would provide for continued use of the cottages, however, would not provide the same legal rights and privileges as a lease. Licences of occupation would be renewed for 5 year terms until Parks Canada requires the land. Parks Canada would not provide financial assistance for the removal of improvements for the cottage lots when the tenure ends.

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Life tenancy would be granted to existing leaseholders through non-assignable, non-transferable leases. Parks Canada would work with the cottagers to establish conditions and standards for the cottage subdivision. Parks Canada would not provide financial assistance for the removal of improvements from the cottage lots when the tenure ends.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

AIR ACCESS

OBJECTIVE:

To define the proper types and levels of air access for the park to provide for visitor

use and enjoyment while still preserving the wilderness character of the park.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

Air access would be restricted to park management purposes with no provision being made for public access and landing. Park trappers would require approval for flights as per the current W.B.N.P. game regulations. Charter pilots would be responsible for securing authorization.

ALTERNATIVE 3:

The general public will be allowed to use commercial charter aircraft for overflights and to gain access to designated landing sites. Approved park concessionaires would not be required as guides. A flight plan must be filed as a back country use permit. Park trappers would require approval for flights. Charter pilots may obtain "standing approval" for such flights.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Public overflights and air access would be permitted when accompanied by a licensed guide or outfitter. Designated flight lines and landing sites will be specified in the guide's license and each trip will be authorized by a back country use permit. Park trappers would require approval for flights. Charter pilots would be responsible for securing authorization.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

WATER ACCESS

OBJECTIVE:

To provide an appropriate level of facility development and public information to enable park visitors to use park lake and waterways.

Parks Canada is proposing developments that will encourage the use of the major rivers and streams of the park. Three alternatives are listed here.

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Limited spur roads to Peace River from the proposed Peace River road. Park residents encouraged to provide service to river users.

Water travel in the park interior will be encouraged by allowing air access to interior lakes and by providing written route guides.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

Specific facility proposals (ie. Moose Island boat launch) will be developed as described elsewhere in this plan. Parks Canada will work co-operatively with the Province of Alberta to develop a boat launch facility at Fort Fitzgerald.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Boat launch at Hay Camp improved, signed and promoted.
Interpretive river guides prepared and made available to boaters.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONAL FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE:

To ensure that the park is efficiently administered by developing the most suitable park facilities in the most suitable locations.

The large size of the park create difficulties in its administration and in providing services to the public. Careful consideration must be given in making park facilities available to the public who require them while still ensuring that the operation of park functions such as fire control, the warden service and general administration requirements are as efficient as possible.

Within the first two alternative plans, the park administration and facility developments will essentially remain the same. The third alternative is based on the Peace River road and provides for facilities to serve visitors that would use this potential access route.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

ALTERNATIVE 2:

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Fort Smith Facilities

New combined park administration, visitor reception centre and fire control building constructed in Fort Smith.

The same as Alternative 1.

The same as Alternative 1.

Warden Patrol Facilities

Patrol cabins upgraded to permit more frequent and regular patrols. Fort Chipewyan office maintained.

The same as Alternative 1.

New warden station developed at Garden Creek. Fort Chipewyan office maintained. Warden service partially decentralized to districts.

Orientation/Interpretation

Facilities/services centred in Ft. Smith with minor facilities/services provided in Fort Chipewyan.

The same as Alternative 1.

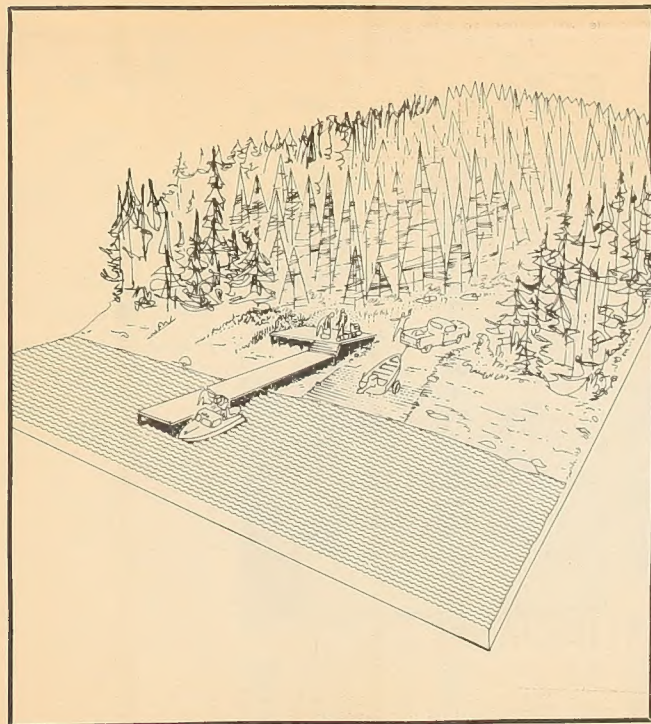
The same as Alternative 1. Orientation facility developed at Garden Creek. This proposal is related to a Peace River access road.

Hay Camp

Retained as fire control base.

The same as Alternative 1.

Retained as fire control base. Modest improvements made to serve as a facility for out-door education programs during fall months.



COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

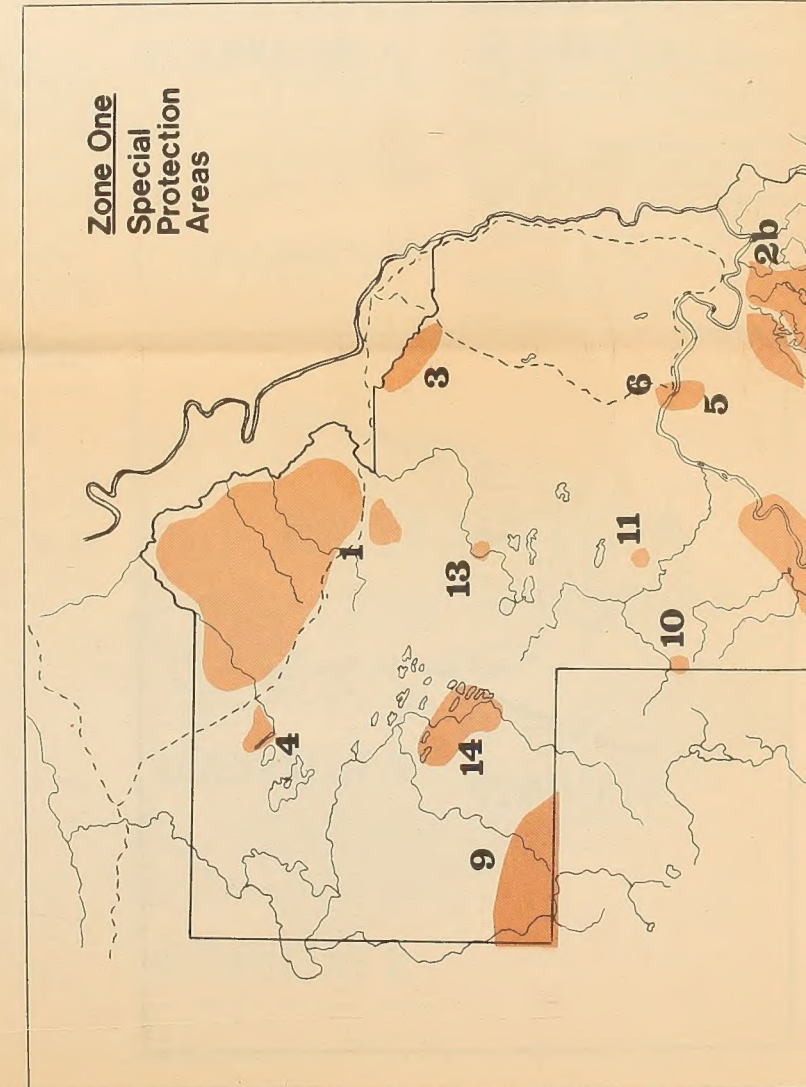
LAND USE ZONING

OBJECTIVE:
To develop a zoning plan for the park to ensure that future park developments and public use of the park do not damage its resources.

Zoning is one of the most important tools for the planning, development and management of national parks. The national park zoning system classifies land and water areas of a national park according to their

need for protection and their capability to accommodate visitors and facilities. The zoning system does not apply to the resource harvesting activity.

The following zoning plan is proposed. Zone



ZONE 1 SPECIAL PRESERVATION

These are specific areas of sites which deserve special preservation because of unique, rare or endangered features or because they are the best examples of certain natural features. Access and use of them will be strictly controlled or may be prohibited altogether. Motorized access or man-made facilities may be prohibited in such areas.

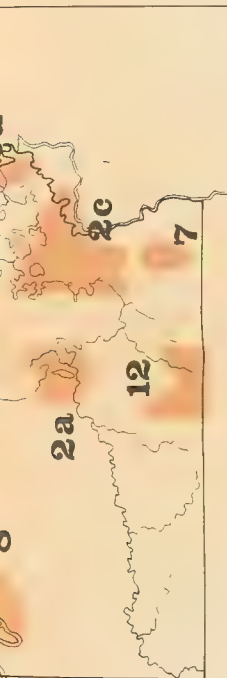
- 1) Whooping crane nesting area. Active management of this resource will continue.
- 2) Four areas of the Peace-Alberta Delta
 - a) the Birch River delta
 - b) the bison calving ground on the north arm of Lake Claire
- 3) the complex of resources of the Hilda-Weistead Lake - Gulf River area.
- 4) peregrine nesting cliffs near Fort Chipewyan.
- 5) The Salt Plains
- 6) The Karst Landscape - including caves, sinkholes and hydrology
- 7) The bison calving area and archaeological sites of Lake One
- 8) The gypsum cliffs, peregrine nesting sites, archaeological and cultural resources of the Peace Point area.
- 9) The Barabon Dunes
- 10) Peace River Meanders
- 11) Upland Tundra Ecosystem (plateau of the Caribou Mountains)
- 12) Berry Creek, Caribou Mountains
- 13) Neon Lake with its sulphur spring sources
- 14) Frontal slopes of the Birch Mountains
- 15) Sulphur springs at Buffalo River

Areas are common to all plan alternatives. The application of the zones 2, 3 and 4 varies depending on the level of development proposed in the three options for access and visitor facilities.

ZONE 1 AREAS APPLY TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds:

These areas will be accurately mapped and will receive special protection.



ZONE 2 - WILDERNESS

These are large areas which will be maintained in a wilderness state. Only certain visitor activities such as hiking and canoeing which require limited facilities will be allowed. Limits will be placed on the numbers of visitors if necessary. Motorized access will not normally be permitted.

ZONE 3 - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

These are areas that will be maintained as natural environments. Certain outdoor activities such as access routes, boating and outfitting will be permitted. Non-motorized access will be preferred. The use of private vehicles will only be permitted where it has traditionally been allowed in the past.

ZONE 4 - RECREATION

These are limited areas that can accommodate a broad range of outdoor recreation activities and the development of related facilities. These include compounds, picnic areas, boat launching facilities and scenic roads. Motorized access will be permitted.

ZONE 5 PARK SERVICES

These are towns and visitor centres in certain existing national parks which contain a concentration of visitor services and support facilities as well as park administration functions.

NO ZONE 5 AREAS: PROPOSED

ALTERNATIVE 1:

Zone 2 represents the bulk of the park area.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

The major part of the park is designated Zone 2. In the Peace-Althabasca Delta, Zone 2 areas are smaller than in alternative 1.

ALTERNATIVE 3:

The bulk of the park area is designated Zone 2.

Parson's Lake road corridor.
Guide/outfitter access in Peace-Althabasca Delta.

Parson's Lake Road exclusive of upgraded northern portions.
Expanded guide/outfitter access routings in Peace-Althabasca Delta.

Rainbow Lakes access corridor.

Water surfaces of Peace-Althabasca Delta

Major Rivers and Channels.
Loop road and associated developed areas (eg. Pine Lake recreation area).
Peace Point road terminus/launch ramp.
Highway 5 corridor and adjacent developed areas

Areas described in alternative 1 plus upgraded northern portion of Parson's Lake road.

Areas previously described plus full length of Parson's Lake road and the Peace River road corridor

NON-CONFORMING USES

Certain developments and land uses which have occurred in Wood Buffalo National Park in the past which remain today are not compatible with the objectives of national parks. They conflict with the zoning plan proposed for the park. Management proposals specific

to those land uses are described elsewhere in these alternative plans. They are as follows:
1) Timber berth no. 408 and commercial timber extraction
2) The community of Garden Creek
3) The community of Peace Point

COMMENTS: (please write comments here)

RESOURCE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

BISON MANAGEMENT



TIMBER BERTH 408

OBJECTIVE:

To ensure the protection of park resource within timber berth 408 while continuing to respect the legal basis for the timber operation.

Commercial timber extraction occurs in the 216 square mile timber berth in the Peace River valley in the park. The first term of the lease expired in 1981 but it will continue through an automatic extension specified in the original lease, until the year 2002. The lease was negotiated before Parks Canada became responsible for the management of the park and therefore legally supercedes park policy. However, commercial timber extraction contravenes Parks Canada's current policy. Two alternatives are proposed to resolve this issue. Either of these courses of action will require detailed discussions between Parks Canada and the timber company.

No additional timber operations outside of the existing berth will be permitted.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

The timber lease would be continued through a series of short term renewals. This would involve three 5 year terms and one 6 year term. Renewals would require detailed operational plans and would be subject to the environmental assessment and review process (EARP) requirements. Environmental and local benefit conditions would be specified for each term. Through discussions between Parks Canada and the timber company, the protection or acquisition of certain representative forest stands within the timber berth will be sought. The purchase of such stands at a mutually agreeable price may be pursued.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

The lease agreement will continue to 2002 through an initial 5 year interim agreement and a subsequent 16 year term. Detailed operational plans would be required for each term. They would define environmental and local benefit conditions specified by Parks Canada. The environmental assessment and review process requirements would have to be met. Protection of representative stands would be pursued in discussions with the timber company.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

OBJECTIVE:

To develop a management direction for the park bison herd that ensures the survival of the herd at an optimum population size employing a minimum of active management measures.

Parks Canada policy notes that natural resources within National Parks will be protected and managed with minimum interference to natural processes. Manipulation of naturally occurring processes will be undertaken only after monitoring has shown that such action is warranted for one or more reasons related to:

- (i) impacts on adjacent lands,
- (ii) threats to public safety or health, or major facilities,
- (iii) requirements to restore the natural balance or compensate for a natural control that no longer exists,
- (iv) the need to ensure the continued existence of rare or endangered species which is critical to the representation of a natural region.

Within this policy framework, the direction for the management of the park bison herd is as follows:

The prime objective is to allow the park bison herd to be naturally regulated without the influence of man. Active manipulation of the herd will be avoided as much as possible. Active management of the herds or their environment would only be undertake if management events resulted in the population dropping to a very low level.

To safeguard against even the most remote potential threats to public safety of health, existing agreements with Agriculture Canada regarding the Animal Disease and Protection Act and Regulations will be maintained. Discussions will be held between Parks Canada and the Alberta and Northwest Territories governments to designate a livestock-free buffer zone adjacent to parts of the park boundary. Research into the diseases which affect the bison will be undertaken to better understand the part that they play in the regulation of the size of the herd and to develop potential disease-control techniques.

Management techniques which apply stress to the bison (round-ups, inoculation programs, collecting specimens etc.) would only be used when essential and only after review by Parks Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service and Agriculture Canada.

Public information programs will inform the public of research and management programs.

Low impact monitoring and surveying of the bison herd will continue.

The ecology and management of the bison will continue to be a major theme of the park interpretation program.

Bison will remain as a protected species and no harvesting will be permitted.

RESOURCE USE: HUNTING, TRAPPING & DOMESTIC FISHING

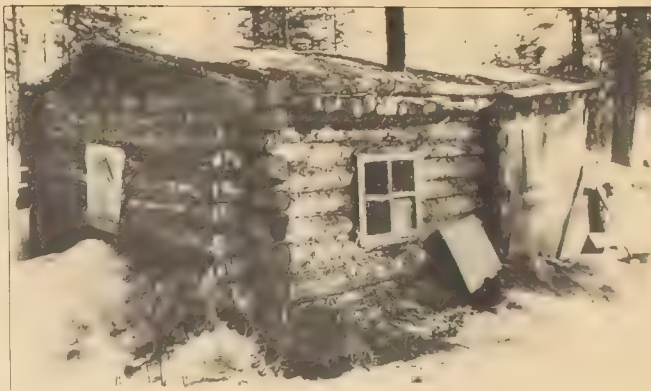
OBJECTIVE:

To ensure that native harvesting of park wildlife resources does not cause wildlife populations to deteriorate in the future.

Wood Buffalo National Park is unique in the national park system in that local native people hunt, trap and fish in the park. This privilege was granted to original residents of the area as an interim measure so that the establishment of the park would not cause undue hardship to those people. It was granted prior to Parks Canada assuming administrative control over the park. This resource harvesting activity has continued through to the present and now occurs throughout the park. It is managed under the Wood Buffalo National Park Game Regulations.

Two alternatives are proposed for the future management of this activity. Under both alternatives, resource harvesting by eligible local residents will continue based on the park game regulations and as provided for in any future land claim settlements.

Active manipulation of wildlife habitats will not be undertaken. Resource harvesting will be carried out within the framework of the objectives and policies of Parks Canada.



COMMENTS: (please write comments here)

ALTERNATIVE 1:

Certain areas of the park in which no hunting or trapping will occur would be designated through consultations between the park hunters and trappers and Parks Canada. These protection zones would be located in each major habitat type to ensure the survival of wildlife populations, both to attain resource protection objectives and to help sustain the hunting and trapping lifestyle of park resource harvesters. When these areas have been mutually agreed upon, they will be described in the park game regulations.

Setting aside such areas would bring this park up to the international standards for parks in which traditional resource harvesting occurs. These standards are defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and require certain park areas to be completely protected from resource harvesting.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Certain aspects of the game regulations such as quotas and the length of seasons would be amended where necessary to ensure the survival of wildlife populations both to attain park resource protection objectives and to help sustain the hunting and trapping lifestyle to park resource harvesters. This closer monitoring of the impact of harvesting on wildlife populations will require additional research, yearly censuses and other measures to provide more accurate information upon which to base wildlife management decisions.

Other management arrangements such as the designations of "family areas" and setting up areas where no trapping and hunting will occur, if requested by the hunters and trappers themselves, would be introduced on a pilot project basis. If proven successful, wider application would follow.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE:

To find the right way of managing fires so that their natural influence is maintained while ensuring public safety and the protection of natural resources and man's developments and facilities.

Natural wildfire is an integral part of the park ecosystem. Studies have shown that fires have always occurred here and in recent years large areas of the park have burned, despite suppression activities.

Parks Canada's policy states that natural resources within National Parks will be protected and managed with minimal interference to natural processes. Manipulation of naturally occurring process, such as fire, will be undertaken only when warranted for reasons outlined in Parks Canada's policy.

The current policy followed in Wood Buffalo National Park is one of modified fire exclusion. Initial attack is taken on all fires, but the level of sustained attack is determined from a priority zone system. The boundaries of each of the three zones are based on the values to be protected.

Two plan alternatives are proposed:

COMMENTS: (please write comments here)

ALTERNATIVE 1:

In the short term the existing modified fire exclusion policy now in use described in alternative 2 would be followed. However, a long term objective would be to implement over time a fire management policy which would approximate the natural fire regime. This would involve fire suppression, containment/observation fires* and prescribed fires (fires that would be permitted to burn under certain conditions and with pre-determined limits). This policy would be implemented through a detailed fire management plan based on technical information and resource values including resource use areas, park facilities and boundary obligations. With the implementation of this policy, the planned use of fire would serve as a resource management tool.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

The current modified fire exclusion policy now in use would be continued. Fire would not be used as a resource management tool. The goal would be to:

- minimize man-caused fires
- minimize the negative impacts on the park resources from all wildfires
- insure safety to human life and park infrastructures.

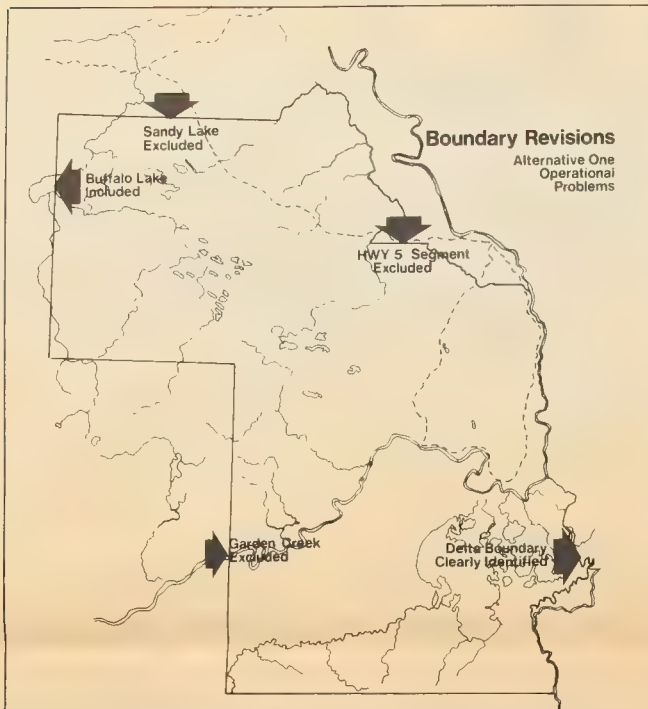
Initial attack would be carried out with no use of prescribed fires.

A fire management plan will be prepared and used to implement this policy. It will outline fire management zones and appropriate expenditure ceilings, the detailed procedures for the management of wildfire within the park and will contain an escape fire analysis procedure to be used when required. Overhead teams will be trained and used to fight "project fires".

* Containment - the confinement of a fire to a predetermined area by direct or indirect means

Observation - the monitoring of a fire on which a decision not to take suppression action has been made. No control action is taken, but contingency plan for containment are made

PARK BOUNDARY CHANGES



OBJECTIVE:

To alter the park boundary where necessary in order to minimize park operation problems, to improve the park by including larger portions of the Caribou and/or Birch Mountains and to reduce the size of the park through land exchanges involving the acquisition of lands elsewhere for national park purposes.

The justification for the present park boundary has been questioned at times in the past from several points of view. The boundary was originally drawn to protect the bison range but park features subsequently discovered now justify the existing boundary. The western and southern boundaries are artificial straight line boundaries which are difficult to locate, especially for the hunters and trappers, tourists and in general other land-users. Some questions remain as to whether or not the park protects the most valuable resources in this area or if there are areas within the park which, while valuable and needed for national park purposes, could nevertheless be exchanged for even more valuable and essential parklands elsewhere.

Three alternatives are proposed here to try and solve those problems. The Province of Alberta, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and local communities directly affected would necessarily be involved in any boundary changes. Parks Canada cannot unilaterally make boundary revisions. Any boundary changes require an amendment to the National Parks Act.

ALTERNATIVE 1:

The park boundary will only be altered to resolve operational and administrative problems: (See map above.)

- Parks Canada will move towards including the entire surface of Buffalo Lake within the park.
- Parks Canada will alter the park boundary to exclude that portion of Sandy Lake now within the park when the Territorial Parks Branch indicates a need to have jurisdiction over the entire lake for the purpose of developing a Territorial park.
- Parks Canada will strive to establish a new boundary along the south side of Hwy. 5 between Lobstick Creek and the Salt River.
- Parks Canada will strive to establish a fixed, identifiable boundary between the mouth of the Embarras River and the Riviere des Rochers in the Peace-Athabasca Delta.
- The Garden Creek area will be excluded from the park.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

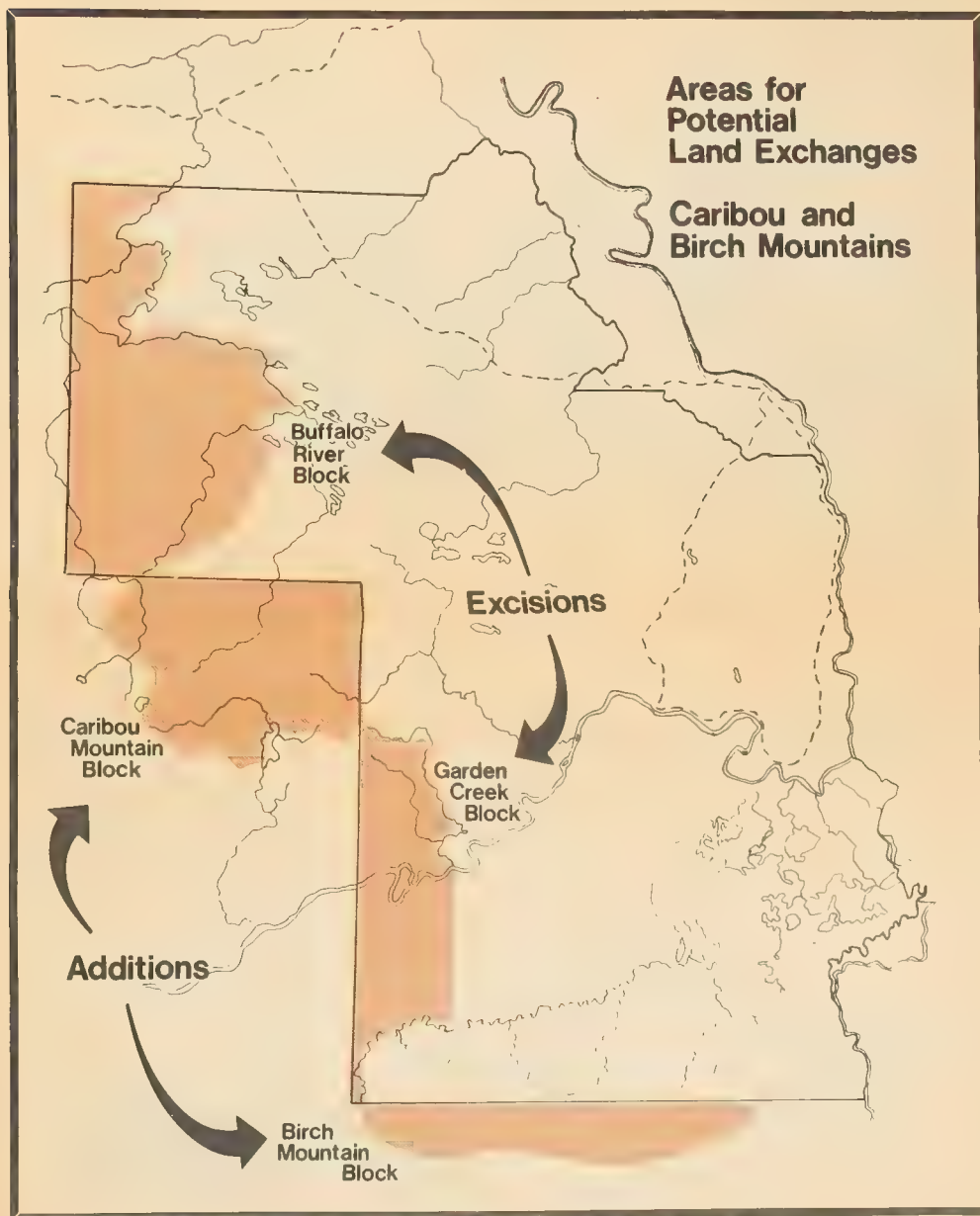
The park boundary may be altered to increase the area of the Caribou and/or Birch Mountains protected within the park. Those alterations will not result in significant changes in the size of the park. Land exchanges will only occur between parklands and lands immediately adjacent to the park.

The park boundary may also be altered where possible to replace existing straight line boundaries with comparable natural boundaries.

Where still applicable, the minor operational problems associated with the boundary will be resolved as defined in Alternative 1. The basis concept for this alternative is shown on the adjacent map. Variations of this alternative in keeping with the overall concept are possible.

Existing parkland identified here for excision are important portions of the park essential for park purposes. They can only be relinquished if even more important lands can be added to the park in exchange. (See map at right.)





PARK BOUNDARY CHANGES (continued)

ALTERNATIVE 3:

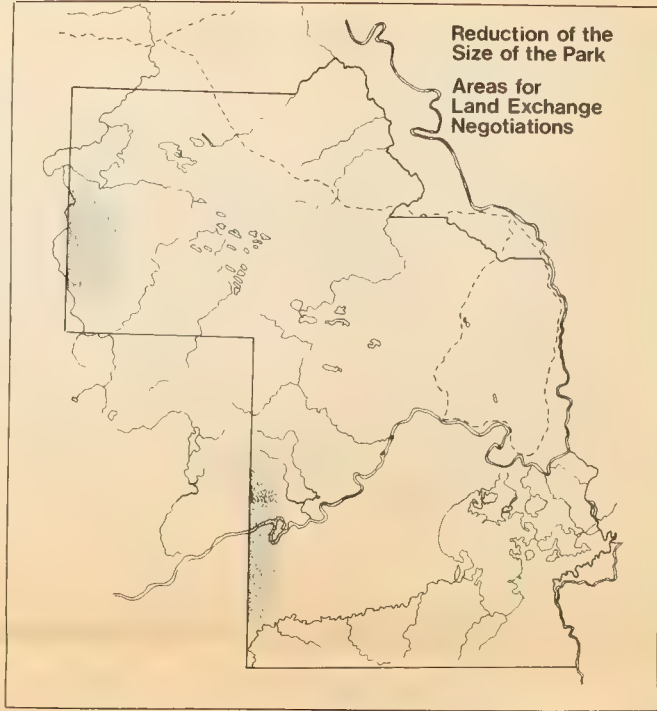
The park boundary may be altered to reduce the size of the park. Those areas of the park required to protect the resources that enable the park to fully represent the northern boreal plains will be maintained intact. The reduction of the park may take place within the context of land exchange negotiations with the government of Alberta and with D.I.A.N.D. and the Government of the Northwest Territories. Two areas of the park shown on the adjacent map are identified where net losses of park land may be acceptable. Precise boundaries of these areas can only be determined during the course of land exchange negotiations.

Area I South of Buffalo Lake contains no known resources not represented in the Oriented Lakes region further to the east.

Area II centred on Garden Creek contains no known resources not represented by park-lands further down river in the Peace River valley.

Losses of park land will only be acceptable if other lands, cultural resources or values located elsewhere and of at least equal value to Parks Canada can be added to the national park system in exchange.

Where still applicable, the general objectives of alternatives one and two, operational problem resolution, the establishment of natural boundaries and the increased protection of the Caribou and/or Birch Mountains, will also be pursued. (See map at right.)



COMMENTS: (please write comments here)



GARDEN CREEK SETTLEMENT



OBJECTIVE:

To find the best course of action for the future development of Garden Creek which satisfies both the desires of the residents of the community and the policies of Parks Canada.

This native settlement, located 12 km inside the west boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park has no clearly defined status. The individual houses of the settlement are recognized under the Wood Buffalo National Park Game Regulations as trappers' cabins. However, the nature of the settlement is changing. It is evolving into a permanent community with all of the service requirements of a small town (school, better road access, airstrip, power supply, etc.) and the understandable desire to determine its own future. Parks Canada accepts the need for autonomy of the residents of Garden Creek. However the National Parks Act places the growth of the community in direct contravention of park policy. This policy states that no new towns can be developed within national parks and that permanent residency in national parks will be limited to those who are providing essential services for the park and who cannot reasonably live outside the park. Only temporary residency is permitted for traditional park users such as native hunters and trappers.

In addition, the jurisdiction for the community is divided between Parks Canada, the Province of Alberta and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Because of these factors, a more clearly defined status for the community is required.

There is only one course for Parks Canada to take, to best serve Garden Creek and, in the long run, the park.

Parks Canada will pursue changes to the boundary of the park which will result in the community being excised from the park. The precise size and boundaries of the area involved would be negotiated between Parks Canada, the Province of Alberta and Garden Creek residents. The community may also be removed from the park as a result of more extensive boundary changes discussed elsewhere in this newsletter. (All such boundary revisions will require parliamentary approval.)

It is important to note that the removal of the community itself in no way changes the hunting and trapping privileges now enjoyed by the residents of Garden Creek. The situation would be similar to that of native residents of Fort Chipewyan, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution and Hay River who live outside the park but have hunting and trapping privileges in the park.

As part of the process of changing the park boundary so that Garden Creek is no longer constrained by the National Parks Act, Parks Canada will take an active coordinator role as a mediator to help the community attain the next stage in its development. There are two options for this:

- (1) Garden Creek residents could begin action to have the area designated as an Indian reserve.
- (2) Garden Creek residents could choose to remain a part of Improvement District 23 or create a hamlet under Alberta provincial legislation.

Parks Canada would support the residents of the settlement in whichever option they choose.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

LAND CLAIMS

OBJECTIVE:

To resolve the outstanding native land claims of the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan which directly affect the park.

Parks Canada accepts the claim of the Cree Band of Fort Chipewyan under the terms of Treaty 8 for lands within Wood Buffalo National Park. Negotiations for the settlement of the claim have been underway for a number of years, however, no final agreement has been reached. The original claim involved 43,000 acres of park land. Two areas in the park have already been claimed and surveyed with the intention of having them become reserves. They are Peace Point (19,013 acres, 29.7 sq. mi.) and Embaras River (22,967 acres, 35.9 sq. mi.). A total of 1,020 acres has yet to be selected from the park.

Parks Canada views the Peace Point claim as involving significant park resources (gypsum cliffs, caves, peregrine falcons, bison calving grounds, archaeological site) and of imposing operational difficulties on the park because it would constitute an enclave of private land within the park. The community now developing at Peace Point would add to those difficulties. The Embaras River area involves commercially valuable stands of timber and is adjacent to the existing park boundary.

In all cases, the claims will be settled on the basis of land areas alone. Changes in land management jurisdiction will not be involved. All park lands other than those specifically claimed will continue to be managed under the National Parks Act and Regulations.

Parks Canada will become involved in the settlement of land entitlements which affect the park and will provide input into the process of establishing reserves within the park and specifying conditions for reserves created from park lands.



ALTERNATIVE 1:

The land claim will be settled on the basis of the original terms agreed to between Parks Canada and the Cree Band. The Peace Point and Embaras River claims will be unaltered.

The 1,020 acres outstanding will be selected adjacent to either of those sites.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Parks Canada will encourage the Cree Band to relinquish land at Peace Point. In exchange, negotiations between Parks Canada and the Band will identify new sites within the park equal in area and/or value to the acreage relinquished at Peace Point to satisfy the claim.

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Parks Canada will increase the total area of the park land involved in the claim beyond the 43,000 acres originally specified in exchange for the Cree Band relinquishing its claim to all of Peace Point. The overall size of the total claim finally agreed to will be determined through negotiations between Parks Canada and the Cree Band and will involve a detailed assessment of the park resources at Peace Point.

The location of the new claim must be acceptable to Parks Canada. Areas in the south-east corner of the park, adjacent to the existing Embaras claim are favoured by Parks Canada.

COMMENTS: (please write comments here)

POSITIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

A number of issues are more readily addressed in terms of specific position statements as opposed to separate plan alternatives. These are presented below.

REGIONAL TOURISM

MAJOR FACILITIES

Commercial accommodation, major recreation facilities and highly developed visitor services will not be provided inside the park. Parks Canada will encourage the development of such facilities/services by the private sector, or other government agencies, in adjacent communities.

GUIDING/OUTFITTING

Parks Canada will continue to actively encourage the development of local outfitting and guiding ventures which provide appropriate visitor opportunities and services.

Where Parks Canada requires a visitor service to be provided by a concessionaire or outfitter, a call for proposals will be issued and the successful operator chosen by Parks Canada through a review and evaluation of the proposals.

Business licences, under which outfitters operate, are subject to annual renewal.

RESEARCH

Parks Canada will contribute to a regional tourism study and assist in developing a regional tourism plan.

PROMOTION

Parks Canada will continue to promote the use of the park by providing information and orientation to the public, government agencies and community groups.

SLAVE RIVER HYDRO PROJECT

Parks Canada cannot accept any negative environmental impacts on park lands that may result from a dam on the Slave River. Any such lands must be excised from the park. Proposals to remove land from the park must satisfy the environmental assessment and review process and then be recommended by the minister responsible for Parks Canada to Parliament. Parliamentary approval is required for any boundary alterations.

Parks Canada will not recommend to Parliament that any part of the delta be excised from the park as it is vital to park objectives. Therefore, a dam on the Slave River must not alter the hydrology and ecology of the delta. Park lands other than delta lands that are affected by the dam must be excised through EARP and the approval of Parliament.

COMPENSATION TO TRAPPERS FOR LOSSES FROM FOREST FIRES

Parks Canada will not provide compensation to park trappers for losses sustained because of forest fires. Efforts will be directed toward assisting park trappers to obtain benefits from provincial or territorial loss compensation programs.

COMMENTS:

(please write comments here)

PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA MONITORING

A lead role will be assumed by Parks Canada in the development of a co-operative environmental monitoring program for the delta.

COMMERCIAL FISHING

No form of commercial fishing will be permitted within the park. Both walleye and gold-eye populations can be considered as seed sources for fish populations commercially exploited outside the park.

WHAT'S NEXT



Public meetings are scheduled to review these alternatives. The next newsletter in this series will present your opinions and choices from your review of these alternatives.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More detailed information on the plan proposals is available by contacting the planning team.

It is not too late to get on the mailing list and become a part of the planning process. You can receive copies of the four previous newsletters which discuss the issues, provide information about the park, and discuss public opinion during the first stages, by mailing the card below to:

Add my name to the mailing list ☐
Send me copies of newsletters 1-4 ☐

Name

Address

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MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROGRAM
BOX 750
FORT SMITH, N.W.T.
X0E 0P0**

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BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
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